

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

2025

BLACK IS...

BOOKLIST FOR ADULTS, TEENS, & CHILDREN



The Black Is... Booklist

is a list of recent books for all ages concerning the experience of Black Americans. It is published as part of the Boston Public Library's observance of Black History Month each year.

Compiled by Boston Public Library staff:

Ritse Adefolalu

Youth Services Librarian, Lower Mills Branch

Liz Blake

Programs & Community Outreach Librarian, Fields Corner Branch

Kirsten DeCortin

Black Is Secretary, Reader Services Librarian, Central Library

Logan Holdsworth

Reader Services Librarian, Central Library

Christina Jones

Branch Librarian, South End Branch

Maija Meadows Hasegawa

Assistant Neighborhood Services Manager, Branches

Magda Morris

Teen Librarian, Codman Square Branch

Daniela Solano Hernandez

Teen Librarian, Grove Hall Branch

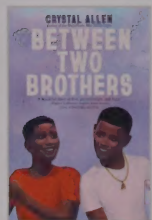
On the Cover: Ruby Bridges

Long Beach, California - June 2022

Photographed by Tom Dumont



CHILDREN



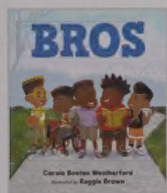
Between Two Brothers 📺

By Crystal Allen

When his older brother Seth is in a serious accident that he may never recover from, 13-year-old Isaiah chooses

to help Seth recover in a way only he can: by trusting in their bond and undying love.

J FICTION ALLEN C



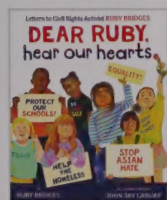
Bros 📺

By Carole Boston Weatherford

Celebrating boyhood and friendship, this upbeat picture book follows a

group of young Black boys as they spend an adventure-filled day together living their best lives freely in their community.

J PICTURE WEATHERF C



Dear Ruby, Hear Our Hearts 📺

By Ruby Bridges

The iconic Black civil rights activist who integrated US schools

responds to letters from young students across America who are concerned about such issues as bullying, climate change, gun violence, and racism.

J E185.61 .B7946 2024



Gamerville 📺

By Johnnie Christmas

Just when Max qualifies for the Gamerville championship, he's sent to Camp Reset. Electronics are forbidden, and he's forced

to socialize, eat healthy, and go outdoors. Now Max must craft an escape plan to level up his dreams of digital domination.

J GRAPHIC GAMERVIL



I See Color

By Valerie Bolling

Highlighting icons such as Madonna Thunder Hawk, Basemah Atweh, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,

this picture book affirms people of color — of all shades — by celebrating their achievements and contributions to society.

J HM1271 .B65 2024



In Search of Superpowers: A Fantasy Pin World Adventure 📺

By Briana Lawrence

Four preteens receive

mysterious pins that grant them superpowers. Together, they must put aside their differences and embark on an epic journey, all while learning how to navigate their new superhuman skills.

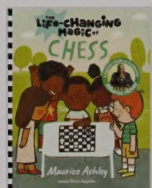
J FICTION LAWRENCE B

📺 available as an audiobook

📺 available as an eBook

📺 graphic novel

📺 large print



The Life-Changing Magic of Chess

By Maurice Ashley

Discover why the world's first Black Grandmaster Maurice Ashley thinks

that chess is one of the best skills in life. Follow him on a journey to the world stage while learning the rules and philosophies of the royal game.

J GV1446 .A84 2024



Like So

By Ruth Forman

Just as the sun loves the day and the moon

loves the waves, a grandmother shows how her family's love is natural and connected to the world around them.

J PICTURE FORMAN R



The Lonely Below

By G. Haron Davis

Eva is suddenly able to see ghosts and discovers that a tragic event which occurred 50 years earlier was no accident. The malevolent

force behind the past tragedy is back, prompting Eva to seek a way to save her fellow classmates before it's too late.

J FICTION DAVIS G



My Daddy Is a Cowboy

By Stephanie Seales and C. G. Esperanza (ill.)

A young girl and her father share an early morning horseback

ride around their city in this picture book celebration of "just-us time."

J PICTURE SEALES S



Sadiq and the Cookie Crash

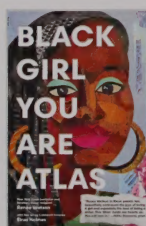
By Siman Nuurali

To earn enough money to buy a birthday gift for his mother, Sadiq, his siblings,

and his friends start a cookie delivery business, but baking and delivering cookies proves to be more complicated (and messy) than they expected.

J EARLY CHAPTER NUURALI S

TEEN



Black Girl You Are Atlas

By Renée Watson

Exploring a childhood in Portland and calling for Black girls to step into their power, this book,

with art by celebrated fine artist Ekua Holmes, encourages young readers to embrace their future with a strong sense of sisterhood and celebration.

TEEN PS3623.A87335 Z46 2024

- 🔊 available as an audiobook
- 📖 available as an eBook
- 🖼️ graphic novel
- 📄 large print



Blood at the Root

By LaDarrion Williams

At an HBCU for the young, Black, and magical, Malik searches for answers about his heritage, his powers, and what really

happened to his mother as his magical community faces a reawakened evil dating back to the Haitian Revolution.

TEEN SCIFI FANTASY WILLIAMS L



Bunt! Striking Out on Financial Aid

By Ngozi Ukazu

In this graphic novel depicting the nightmares of paying for college,

Molly's full-ride scholarship has vanished! But if she and nine other art students win a single game of softball, they'll receive a massive athletic scholarship.

TEEN GRAPHIC BUNT



The Color of a Lie

By Kim Johnson

It's 1955 and Calvin's family leaves Chicago in the wake of a tragedy to find a safe space...in a "Whites Only" neighborhood.

Calvin can pass, but when he discovers the deeper, darker truths of this new community, will he want to?

TEEN FICTION JOHNSON K



Dead Girls Walking

By Sami Ellis

In this spine-chilling slasher, a girl searches for her dead mother's body at the summer camp that was once her

serial killer father's home.

TEEN FICTION ELLIS S



Ghost Roast

By Shawnelle Gibbs and Shawneé Gibbs

It's hard to fit in when your dad's a professional ghosthunter, and even worse when you have

to work for him over the summer! Now Chelsea needs to decide whether to save a friendly spirit's afterlife, or risk everything her father's worked for.

TEEN GRAPHIC GHOST ROAST



The Maid and the Crocodile

By Jordan Ifueko

Small Sade has a secret: she can alter people's fates by cleaning their houses. She just needs

a job, and employers who don't mind her disability. But before she can be hired, she accidentally binds herself to a god rumored to devour pretty girls.

TEEN SCIFI FANTASY IFUEKO J

 available as an audiobook

 available as an eBook

 graphic novel

 large print



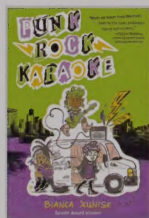
The Poisons We Drink

By Bethany Baptiste

Venus Stoneheart brews illegal love potions to support her family, but when her mother is murdered,

revenge comes at a cost. Now she must brew potions for the Grand Witcher, delving into her city's corrupt underbelly.

TEEN SCIFI FANTASY BAPTISTE B



Punk Rock Karaoke

By Bianca Xunise

Ariel dreams of leaving her southside Chicago neighborhood and making it big as a punk rocker with her best friends and

bandmates. Can their friendship survive young adulthood after high school?

TEEN GRAPHIC PUNK ROCK KARAOKE



Wander in the Dark

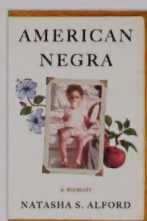
By Jumata Emill

Two brothers must come together to solve the murder of the most popular girl in school after one of them is caught

fleeing the scene of her death. Will proving Amir's innocence repair the rift that's always existed between them?

TEEN MYSTERY EMILL J

MEMOIR



American Negra

By Natasha S. Alford

An inspiring coming-of-age story about Alford's journey to find her true self: an award-winning journalist, political

analyst, and proud Afro-Latina woman.

BIOG E185.97.A356 A3 2024

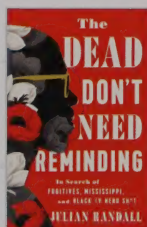


Bits and Pieces

By Whoopi Goldberg

This new memoir from multi-award winner Whoopi Goldberg highlights her close relationship with her mother and brother, their influence on her early life, and how, even after success, family always came first.

BIOG PN2287.G578 A3 2024



The Dead Don't Need Reminding: In Search of Fugitives, Mississippi, and Black TV Nerd Sh*t

By Julian Randall

Using humor, lyrical prose, and epic pop culture references, Randall chronicles his journey back from crippling depression while also exploring the history of his white-passing grandfather and his narrow escape from the South.

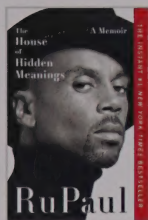
BIOG HN90.M3 .R36 2024

 available as an audiobook

 available as an eBook

 graphic novel

 large print



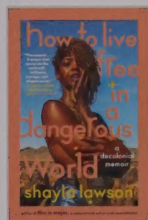
The House of Hidden Meanings 📖 🎧

By RuPaul

In his most personal book yet, RuPaul gives readers an intimate look at his life: his struggles growing

up Black and queer in a broken home, and later finding family, belonging, and success on his journey to self-acceptance.

BIOG PN1992.4.R86 A3 2024



How to Live Free in a Dangerous World 📖 🎧

By Shayla Lawson

These essays focus on the transformative power of travel and prove that each new location, missed

connection, loss, and experience can reveal unimaginable beauty and freedom.

BIOG PS3612.A9544 Z46 2024



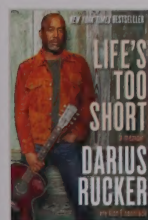
I Am Maroon 📖 🎧

By Russell Shoatz

This sweeping memoir follows Shoatz's life as a gang member, a Black liberation leader, and a political prisoner, and

highlights the justice and liberation he fought for his whole life.

BIOG E185.615 .S49183 2024



Life's Too Short 📖 🎧

By Darius Rucker

Grammy award-winning artist Darius Rucker recounts his life and distinguished 40-year career through the music that made him.

BIOG ML420.R8925 A3 2024



Make It Count: My Fight to Become the First Transgender Olympic Runner 📖

By Cecé Telfer

The inspiring story of the first openly transgender

woman to win an NCAA championship, from her early years growing up in Jamaica, to creating a new life in North America, enduring transphobia and criticism every step of the way.

Telfer's story is sure to motivate others to persist in the face of adversity.

BIOG GV1061.15.T45 A3 2024



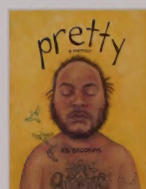
Pack Light: A Journey to Find Myself 📖

By Shilletha Curtis

Curtis shares her inspiring journey to change the narrative of "Hiking While Black" as she thru-hikes the

Appalachian trail from Georgia to Maine and recounts her lifelong struggle with anxiety, depression, PTSD, and ADHD.

BIOG GV199.42.A68 C67 2024



Pretty 📖 🎧

By KB Brookins

A fierce and inspiring memoir by a prize-winning, young Black trans writer that explores what it

means to be "other." It is as much a love letter as it is a call for change.

BIOG HQ76.27.A37 K35 2024

- 🎧 available as an audiobook
- 📖 available as an eBook
- 🌟 graphic novel
- 📖 large print



Take Care of Them Like My Own ◻ ◻

By Ala Stanford, M.D.

In this inspirational memoir and empowering call to action, the founder of the Black Doctors

Consortium recounts her experiences on both sides of the scalpel and highlights the devastating effects of the racial health gap in our healthcare system.

BIOG RD27.35.S694 A3 2024



Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human ◻ ◻

By Cole Arthur Riley

The founder of Black Liturgies, a digital project

created in summer 2020 amidst racial violence and pandemic isolation, connects spiritual practice with Black emotion, memory, and the Black body in this collection of prayers, poetry, and writings.

BL625.2 .A79 2024

EXPRESSIONS



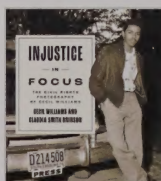
Appetite for Change

By Michelle Horovitz

Stories and recipes for healthy, affordable soul food classics nourish

the reader, showing how multiple cultures can commingle within one cookbook — and even one plate.

TX714 .H668 2024



Injustice in Focus: The Civil Rights Photography of Cecil Williams ◻

By Cecil Williams and Claudia Smith Brinson

With eighty stunning photographs accompanied by research and interviews, an award-winning photojournalist offers a firsthand look into South Carolina's fight for civil rights and his life as a documentarian of the civil rights movement.

F280.B53 W55 2023



The Black Box: Writing the Race ◻ ◻

By Henry Louis Gates

This collection of writings tells the epic story of Black self-definition in America, from a myriad of writers who

have used words to create a livable world — a "home" — for Black people destined to live out their lives in a racist society.

E185.625 .G38 2024



Magic Enuff ◻ ◻

By Tara M. Stringfellow

Embracing complexity and the painful, wonderful way two conflicting things can be true at once, Stringfellow's electrifying poems illustrate

a universal tale of survival and revolution through the lens of Black femininity.

PS3619.T7529 A6 2024

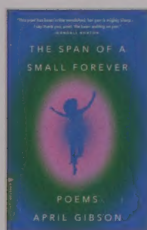


Praisesong for the Kitchen: Ghosts, Stories, and Recipes From Five Generations of Black Country Cooks

By Crystal Wilkinson

A lyrical culinary journey that explores the hidden stories of Black Appalachians through powerful essays and forty comforting recipes from the Poet Laureate of Kentucky.

TX715.2.S68 W485 2024



The Span of a Small Forever

By April Gibson

With breathtaking lyricism and a vulnerability that pierces the heart, Gibson journeys through the

emotional abysses, daily pleasures, frustrations, and joys of being a Black woman living with chronic illness.

PS3607.I2645 S63 2024



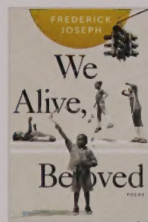
Vegan Mob: Vegan BBQ & Soul Food

By Toriano Gordon

Gordon shares more than eighty recipes for mouthwatering plant-

based fast food from the cult favorite Oakland BBQ joint Vegan Mob.

TX837 .G656 2024



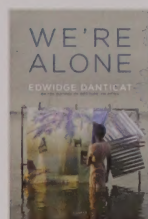
We Alive, Beloved

By Frederick Joseph

Poems from bestselling author and activist Frederick Joseph celebrate the beauty of being Black and holding onto moments

of joy, love, resilience, and inspiration in a fast-moving, modern world.

PS3610.O6684 W42 2024



We're Alone

By Edwidge Danticat

Tracing a loose arc throughout Edwidge Danticat's life, these essays include writings exploring environmental catastrophe, the complexities of resilience, and the traumas of colonialism and motherhood.

PS3554.A5815 W47 2024



You Get What You Pay For

By Morgan Parker

In this memoir-in-essays, Parker examines America's cultural history, racial consciousness, and

relationship to Black Americans through the ages with unflinching criticism.

E185.625 .P37 2024

-  available as an audiobook
-  available as an eBook
-  graphic novel
-  large print

NONFICTION



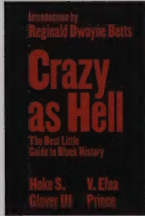
Black Meme: A History of the Images That Make Us

By Legacy Russell

Russell explores the “meme” as mapped to Black visual culture from

1900 to the present, showing that without the contributions of Black people, digital culture would not exist in its current form.

P94.5.B552 U567 2024



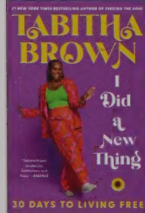
Crazy as Hell: The Best Little Guide to Black History

By Hoke S. Glover III and V. Efu Prince

This refreshing, insightful, and sacrilegious take

on African American history explores the runaways and rebels who have made history, defying the expectations designated for being Black in America.

E185 .G56 2024



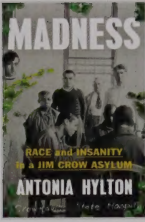
I Did a New Thing: 30 Days to Living Free

By Tabitha Brown

Brown challenges you to participate in her 30-day personal challenge called “I

Did a New Thing!” The challenge is simple: every day, do something you've never done before. All you have to do is show up for yourself, right here, right now.

BF637.S4 B76 2024



Madness: Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum

By Antonia Hylton

Tracing the legacy of slavery to the treatment of Black people's bodies and minds

in our current healthcare system, an award-winning journalist tells the 93-year-old history of Crownsville Hospital, one of the nation's last segregated asylums.

RC445.M28 H95 2024



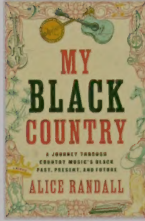
The Message

By Ta-Nehisi Coates

In three intertwining essays, Coates journeys to sites of conflict in Senegal, South Carolina, and Palestine to explore

how the stories we tell — and the ones we don't — shape our realities.

PN4874.C598 A3 2024



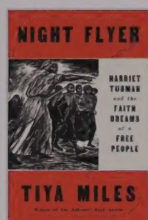
My Black Country: A Journey Through Country Music's Black Past, Present, and Future

By Alice Randall

An award-winning

professor, songwriter, and author reflects on her search for the first family of Black country music as she celebrates the storied history of the music genre.

BLOG ML3524 .R34 2024



Night Flyer: Harriet Tubman and the Faith Dreams of a Free People

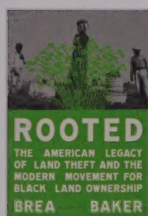


By Tiya Miles

Transforming a fantastical figure from a bygone time

into an accessible, modern-day inspiration, Miles reckons with the myth and truth behind Harriet Tubman, an American everyone knows but few really understand.

BIOG E444.T82 M55 2024



Rooted: The American Legacy of Land Theft and the Modern Movement for Black Land Ownership

By Brea Baker

An acclaimed writer and

activist unpacks the historic attacks on Indigenous and Black land ownership as she traces her own family history of land loss, identifying such violence as the root of persistent inequality in this country.

HD207 .B35 2024



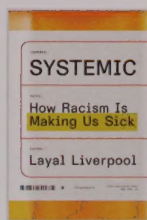
Sharks Don't Sink: Adventures of a Rogue Shark Scientist

By Jasmin Graham

A marine biologist and co-founder of Minorities in Shark Sciences shares

how she flourished outside of academia by remembering the important lesson she learned from these misunderstood and vulnerable creatures: Keep moving forward.

BIOG QH91.3.G73 A3 2024



Systemic: How Racism Is Making Us Sick

By Layal Liverpool

Showing how racism is woven into medicine and science and is harmful to our health, a virologist reveals

the fatal stereotypes that keep people of color undiagnosed, untreated, and unsafe.

RA563.M56 L58 2024

FICTION



A Cup of Flour, A Pinch of Death

By Valerie Burns

Influencer Maddy Montgomery has turned the bakery she inherited into a destination. But

when the body of her former nemesis is found in the freezer, Maddy instantly goes from viral sensation to murder suspect.

MYSTERY BURNS V



American Ghoul

By Michelle McGill-Vargas

You can't kill someone who's already dead. That's what Lavinia keeps telling her jailer after — allegedly — killing her mistress. But

how could Simone be dead when she was taking callers just a few minutes before?

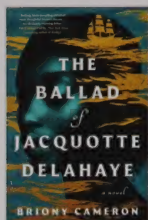
FICTION MCGILLVA M

🔊 available as an audiobook

📖 available as an eBook

🖨️ graphic novel

📖 large print



The Ballad of Jacquotte Delahaye

By Briony Cameron

Based on true events, this epic tale illuminates a woman of color's rise to power as one of the few

purported female pirate captains to sail the Caribbean, and the forbidden love story that will shape the course of history.

FICTION CAMERON B



Blessings

By Chukwuebuka Ibeh

Obiefuna has always been the black sheep of his family. When an intimate connection blossoms between him and a boy

from a nearby village, happiness is fleeting once his father catches them together and banishes him to boarding school.

FICTION IBEH C



Brooklyn

By Tracy Brown

Brooklyn James has finally gotten the punishment she deserves after leaving a web of lies, heartache, and betrayal behind

her. As her life slips away, Brooklyn remembers the events that shaped her into a cold, calculating creature.

FICTION BROWN T



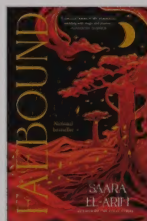
Come and Get It

By Kiley Reid

A senior RA at the University of Arkansas accepts an easy yet unusual opportunity offered by a visiting professor, but

things get messy when her new side-hustle is jeopardized by odd new friends, vengeful dorm pranks, and illicit intrigue.

FICTION REID K



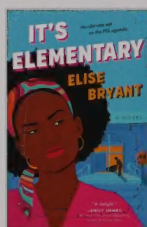
Faebound

By Saara El-Arifi

In this first installment in a new fantasy trilogy, an elven warrior and her prophet sister encounter the fae court after being

forced into the terrifying wilderness beyond their homeland's borders.

SCIFI FANTASY ELARIFI S

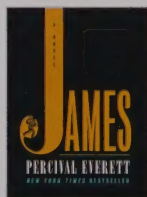


It's Elementary

By Elise Bryant

When an elementary school principal vanishes, an overworked single parent suspects a domineering PTA president of foul play.

MYSTERY BRYANT E



James

By Percival Everett

This retelling of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both harrowing and ferociously funny, is told

from the perspective of Jim, Huckleberry's friend and an escaped slave.

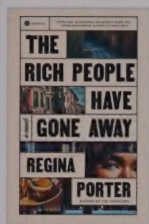
FICTION EVERETT P

available as an audiobook

available as an eBook

graphic novel

large print



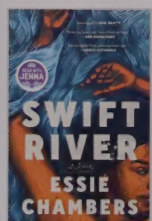
The Rich People Have Gone Away

By Regina Porter

When his pregnant wife goes missing after a heated argument, Theo Harper becomes the prime suspect.

As their families and friends come together to search for her, the past and present collide with startling consequences.

FICTION PORTER R



Swift River

By Essie Chambers

In 1987, Diamond Newberry, the only Black person in Swift River, gains family and finds her place in the world when she receives

a letter that introduces her to generations of African American Newberry women.

FICTION CHAMBERS E

ROMANCE



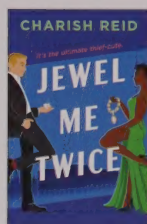
Curvy Girl Summer

By Danielle Allen

Approaching her thirtieth birthday, Aaliyah seeks love through a dating app with her friends' support, but finds

unexpected connections amidst the lies, catfishing, fetishizing, and overall chaos of online romance.

ROMANCE ALLEN D



Jewel Me Twice

By Charish Reid

A professional thief and her ex-lover (and partner in crime) rekindle their passion as they crisscross Europe on a real-life treasure hunt.

ROMANCE REID C



The Kiss Countdown

By Etta Easton

In this starry debut, a struggling event planner and a sinfully hot astronaut must decide

if their fake relationship is worth a shot at happily-ever-after.

ROMANCE EASTON E



Let the Games Begin

By Rufaro Faith Mazarura

Interning at the Summer Games in Athens, Olivia meets Zeke, the heartthrob runner of

Team Britain. As they become close, she must decide if their relationship is strong enough to cross the finish line.

ROMANCE MAZARURA R

-  available as an audiobook
-  available as an eBook
-  graphic novel
-  large print



A Little Kissing Between Friends

By Chencia C. Higgins

A free-spirited DJ with commitment issues falls for her good friend, a popular strip club dancer.

Together, the pair must navigate the blurring lines between friendship, attraction, and conflicting desires.

ROMANCE HIGGINS C



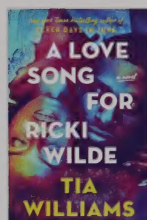
A Love Like the Sun

By Riss M. Neilson

A privacy-loving homebody gets help from her internet-famous friend as the two pretend to date to help boost her family's local

Providence shop for natural hair, only to find real romance beneath their friendship.

ROMANCE NEILSON R



A Love Song for Ricki Wilde

By Tia Williams

Leaving behind her socialite family in Atlanta, Ricki Wilde moves to New York to open a flower shop as the

Harlem Renaissance swirls around her.

FICTION WILLIAMS T



One and Done

By Frederick Smith

One chance encounter. One night of passion. Will Taylor and Dustin leave it at one and done?

ROMANCE SMITH F



Pardon My Frenchie

By Farrah Rochon

Managing her successful doggie daycare and taking care of her teen twin sisters, Ashanti finds everything she's worked

for hanging in the balance and must make nice with an infuriating man.

ROMANCE ROCHON F



Second Night Stand

By Karelia & Fay Stetz-Waters

When ballerina Lillian meets burlesque dancer "Blue Lenox," the attraction between them

is electric, but when they discover they're both competing in a famous reality competition, they must decide if it's worth breaking all the rules to be together.

ROMANCE STETZWAT K

 available as an audiobook

 available as an eBook

 graphic novel

 large print



When I Think of You 📖 🎵

By Myah Ariel

When her college boyfriend, now a hot shot director, offers her a job, Kaliya finally gets her chance break into the movie-

making business. As a true connection forms between them, Hollywood politics and scandal threaten everything.

ROMANCE ARIEL M



BLACK IS...

BOOKLIST FOR ADULTS, TEENS, & CHILDREN



City of Boston

Michelle Wu, *Mayor*

**BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**

Boston Public Library

David Leonard, *President*



Board of Trustees

Ray Liu, *Chair of the Board*

Evelyn Arana Ortiz, *Vice Chair of the Board*

Navjeet K. Bal

Joe Berman

Jim Canales

Cheryl Cronin

John T. Hailer

Jeffrey B. Hawkins

Julie Kim

Jonathan S. Lavin

José C. Masso III

Porsha Olayiwola

Mike Rush

Christian Westra

Lynn Perry Wooten



BPL.ORG